

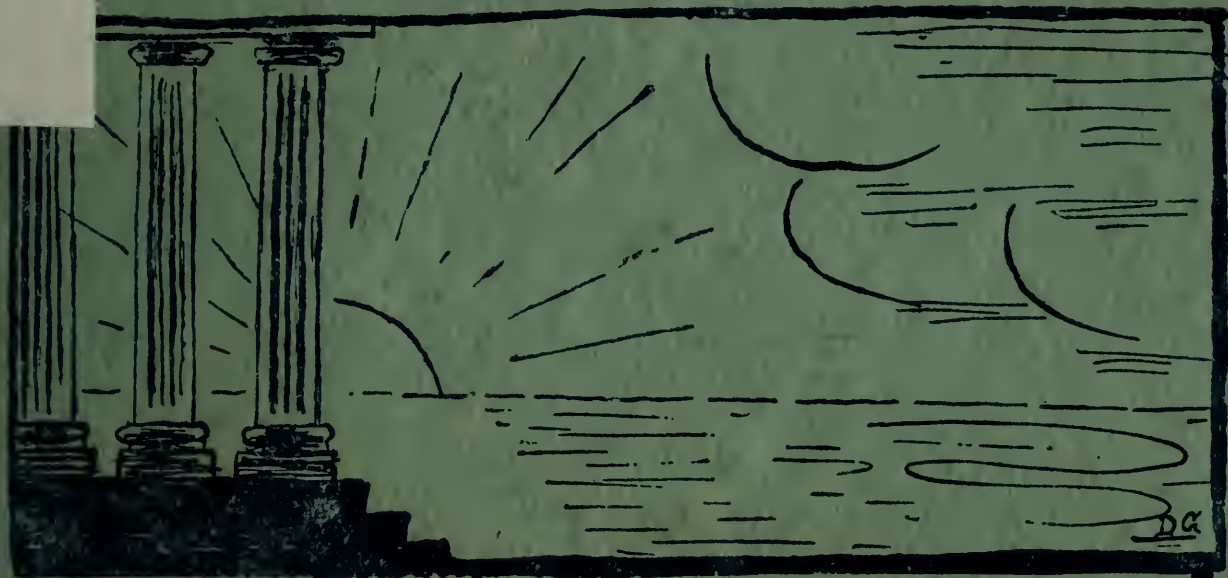
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SONNETS



OF THE DAY

by

DOUGLAS GREENWOOD

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PS 3513
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1919

DEDICATION

"A ciascun alma presa e gentil core."

—*Dante.*

Translation:

"To every captive soul and gentle heart."

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JUN 18 1919

no 1

In the Open Tower

Dreaming she lies, yet wakes to some sweet thing,
Drawn beyond sleep, and on a sunnier tide
Than glimmering night reveals. Her lips divide
As if some eager joy that loves to cling
Had kissed them so. The calm air's murmuring
Is music in her thought beneath the wide
Blue heaven's deep height. She is the very bride
And goddess of love's lonely tarrying.

Self-singing songs which the heart listening hears
And loses in effacing joy, have never
Told all the thought in which she meets her lover;
For this is she for whom all songs forever
Kindle new fire, and the mute hours discover
Pulsations of innumerable years.

M.E.W. - 4/2/19

Ladder of Dreams

O never yet, for any home of youth,
Have I so wearied in my wanderings,
As for a vague and drifting house, which stands
Among the fairy clouds of dream and truth,
Builded on winds that drift above the sands,
Haunted by sound of doves, by glimmering wings
Lightly overshadowed, little known to praise,
Or planned for building. Still it waits my hands.
Though it be builded high, yet I will raise
An Earth beneath it; and if it should hold,
Imprisoned as in latency, a being
Lovelier than thought, will set a crown of days,
Golden with dawn there to the end, all freeing
Joy to itself, so found as from of old.

Weird Weather

I would have music; at this hour would hear
Music and singing. For the hour has no mate,
And the deep air is blue and passionate,
And nowhere has the day, yet everywhere,
A heart and soul, which is but ours, and here
Resumes for us the interrupted state
Of a whole World's vast paradise, elate
With terrible splendors, on a broken stair
Twixt Heaven and Earth. . . . In some forgotten time,
Or in deep dreams that come in April weather,
We wandered on such hills as these together,
And drank, in sleep, the poison of such flowers
As grow just here; and felt such pausing hours
Enfold the solemn splendor of this clime.

Death

In the still hour of dawn came close to me
Death upon wings of easy motion flying,
Death, like a presence and a mystery
Growing to strange new visibility;
And smiled amid his radiance, and said:
“Desire me not too much, though love seem dead,
And you may know me gentle to the dying.”

“You are the lord of broken hearts,” I said,
‘Of fading flower, spent river, fallen head,
And dying day. In our divided lot
We share one calm, one hope, one knowledge, never
Changing our will.”

Then said he: “Seek me not.
I, the revealer of new life and thought,
Will come as the reward of your endeavor.”

Cité d'Orphée

Each hour, by thought and word, and deed, we give
Power to the best or worst. We cannot cease
To build and fashion, while Time's moments live
And space is wide, dungeons or palaces.
The past is rich in ruin of such; and they,
The sceptre-bearers in the realm of song,
Who to Apollo's deity belong,
Have built imperishably. A splendor glows
In the far future, where, from hills of dawn,
Issues a river. There the orphic sound
Of a wise singing raises visibly
The fabric of a vision fair to see,
And kindles fire of flowers upon a lawn
Which for mere happiness is holy ground.

By the Shore—Nocturne

Through leagues of darkness, like an emptied bowl,
Which held white fire, the new moon leans a rim
Of silver light. Flowers close, as hues grow dim
To closing eyes. Quiet unites the whole.
A while since, on a western oriole,
Flamed the low Sun; and a nun's evening hymn
Summoned the faces of the cherubim,
Till night received the hush of that mute soul;
And still, in dream, the faces shone. . . . But I
Have not that quiet. Sounds recede, and die,
Receding further; night is conscious, close
About its hidden things in their repose;
But I seek love, framed as in far-away
Intense eternal ever-springing day.

Aftermath

The garden of the past was desolate,
Its flowers all withered, and its sunshine low
Wan as late moonlight upon twilight snow.
From interdiction and the storm of Fate
Ruin remained; and though all winds abate
There is no peace after such rage.

But now

Is come decay of ruin; and bright winds blow
Over the mellowing crumbled house. The gate
Lies amid flowers; dawn richens; thrushes mate;
The wind-stirred grass is tall and ripe to mow.

At sunset twittering swallows wheel and soar
Round the grey tower high up in evening air.
The twilight has a dawn of hope, a stair
Leading through delicate cloud, an airy shore
With a good haven, where my thoughts behold
Sweet singing sorrows, clad in cloth of gold.

To the Majority

I. The Home Truth

If Nature will not yield the boon she bears,
If the Earth groans with misery and grieves;
If Christ is crucified between two thieves
On each of all the days of all the years;
If strange confusions multiply, and fears
Confound in darkness all that man achieves;
If man knows not the pattern that he weaves,
And kens not well the harbor that he nears;
If childhood is a thing of little worth,
And manhood bought and sold and cast aside;
If woman is the plaything or the bride
Of such a wretched wastrel of the Earth,
Whose fault—by whose permission and decree
But yours and yours who *will* not to be free?

To the Majority

II. Confession

The crime of crimes is ours that we have given
Connivance—lawyers, priests and lowly men—
To ours and others grief under all Heaven,
Over all Earth. What help is for us then?
We have slain the best; and those who might have been
Gentle, have we made captive before birth
Through anguished mothers;—through vile slums obscene
And mart and factory we have grieved the Earth.
By our connivance have we lured to crime
The weak; and punished them in cruel fear
And greed and ignorance, we who might have taught—
Would we have learned it—all the joy of time.—
O we, “the People,” who are censured here,
Is all our sloth and wickedness as naught?

A Message of May

I. Freedom

You know what freedom is? It is to be
Ushered in welcome from the shadowy land
Of the unborn; first, among children, free,
To learn the living present; understand
The past, and glimpse the future so, and bear,
Free among men, the burden of life and love,
Strengthened for labor, glad for pleasure, dear
To those who honor the Earth and skies above.

It is to be what Freedom's self can make
Only a few till all alike are free.
For us it means to be as lulled awake
In that wise future—knowing what men shall be
When one man wills another to be free—
And therefore glad to suffer for their sake.

A Message of May

II. Confidence

There shall not come redemption out of chains
Till you and I have conquered the vague power
Which is their slave who bind us, bred of pains
Dreaded and suffered long; and in this hour
Felt near us like the insolence of shame.
It is not fear, yet like the shadow of fear,
Whispers discouragement—its better name
Doubt: let it vanish now the dawn is near.

Have we not speech and patience? Is there not
Cohesion in the life of living things?
The Sun and Moon are partners in our lot;
Swiftness and slowness both; Nature has wings
To hasten purposes; and power she brings
Is strong to serve an overruling thought.

A Message of May

III. Rumor of Pan

O comrades of the dawn, co-workers good,
Whose blood was spilt far down into the night
On journeying winds, O Human Brotherhood
Whose heart and mind has sensed a fair delight
Beneath all sorrow—when deep organs blow
Musical thunder, and bright dancing comes
Through shadowed air, or when huge clouds and slow
Unstore their lightning, and the first rain drums,
Quick-pattering—feel as now the hush and stir
And preparation of things that pause, and wait
Completion of an effort long put forth.
There may be tumult ere the winds abate;
There *is* confusion over south and north;
But nature is restored—be glad with her.

A Message of May

IV. Ideality

It was not for a vain and foolish whim
That Liberty was named a woman—she,
Nature divine, is gentle mother of him,
And sweeter than the face of man may be,
Her face. And though strange gods have lured, and vile
Worms of the mire, and tenfold blasphemies
Have been his idols, and confused awhile
Our song—yet there shall come of cleansing seas
To shining shores this beautiful-footed one,
Belovéd more than Aphrodite, and set,
Against all darkness lucent as the Sun,
Within whose light, as hers, are all things met,
As in one life which knows not to forget,
But is the Universe, and is alone.

A Message of May

V. Realization

O listen! you to whom strange life were sweet.
The land shall grow so fair that it shall seem
That light of heaven is gold before our feet
Over red earth. The happiness of dream,
And things remote, shall come to dwell with us;
The great desire of bleeding hearts shall come,
(Music more sweet than of the angelus)
And make amid our folded hills a home.

Things perfected in thought and dream shall be
Gardened and builded so that one may guess,
Approaching, from one city's loveliness,
The whole land's beauty, and how sweet love is,
How calm old age there—as if Earth, made free,
Glided in sunshine of a sea of bliss.

Kings

Whom shall we honor, now the shadows flee,
And darkness, like a wind, gathers away
The kings, whom all their delegated sway
Fast follows? With what crown of majesty
Would they be crowned who know to set men free?
Shall we not better bring, with them, the day,
Remembering night; and seek within, as they,
The increasing and slow dawn, as once did he
For whom the temple veil was rent, whose lips
Were sealed as in the darkness of eclipse;
Who feared no hell; and wore on Earth no crown
Save one of thorns; whom the World sees and hears
Dimly as men in dream see tower and town—
And may not love, confused with many fears.

Multitudes

I cannot lose the pitiful faces, going
In throngs or singly by. I will bid spare,
For pity of these even those who strip them bare.
In time of storm I, utterly well knowing
Folly of vengeance, will be strong in showing
Kindness to them; and will have special care
Of those they love. I will not give despair
Victim for victim when the light is growing.

The shut heart which contains the hard thing greed;
The mind which closes eyes and ears, and toils
Most in that service, these are known to me,
Loathsome; yet even such would I set free.
It is enough that they should lose the spoils;
It is enough that all have help at need.

The Time of Trouble

They pass forever, going whence they came,
The lords of night. They pass, to be of those
Who but remember the unnumbered woes
Whose fruit they leave, that and their fall, the same
Sorrow in double shape, two griefs. Their name,
Louder than Liberty's, till she uprose,
Triumphant after countless overthrows,
Is darkened in the splendor of her fame.

The greed that led them, and the slaves who follow,
See one another now. The hills are loud
In the grey dawn, with testing of things hollow.
The old reliable fraud had witnesses.
And a new storm prepares, a gathering cloud
Wakens low thunders in the mute abyss.

To a Certain Respectable Man

You love life well.—Why, live then! Grope, and twine
Around your mean desires; and prize each well
Of all the things you grasp; and feed the swine,
Fat in your heart. There is no deeper hell
Than these things lost—when you have failed to win
One lasting joy. And when you die you'll meet
God—and the devil—both yourself, your sin
And its accuser, face to face. And then
I think you'll front your victims in the street,
Whom your sloth would not aid, your narrow scorn
Of careful thought refused to understand.
And you will wish that you had not been born,
And hate your greed, and see upon your hand
The blood of those you called your fellow men.

To a Certain Clergyman

They have done this thing, you say, and have no merit
To win our mercy now. You are wild it seems.
Out of the primal dark do you inherit
A mind like this. Your glance fixates and gleams,
Suddenly savage. You would make a pen
Of a whole nation, where the weak must cry
In helpless wretchedness. Those were not men;
These are one blood with the cruel monsters. Aye!
But who is guiltless? which the nation free
From such attaint in death of those who die
In the land's home, our own and not another's?
They—without words, with hands and feeble cry,
While for themselves they beg, and for their mothers,
Beg mercy for all dumb things constantly.

The Masters

They never will forsake us, those who grew
Great in their hearts forever. They retain
The memory of our intermittent pain,
And of their own Gethsemene's garden dew.
They are not wrath with us, though we are few
And slow in our response, not knowing the gain,
The loss not knowing. . . . Far across the plain
Rises the mountain. . . . And to strive anew;
To emulate their service to the power
Which lives within us like a still white flower;
To unweave imagined spells, the barriers
Between the inner and the outer heaven,
And so give Truth the tribute that is hers;
This is to conquer, this to be forgiven.

Easternight

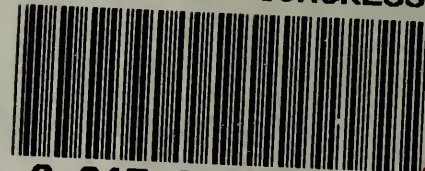
Lilies and lights about a crucifix
At Easter; and a clear face beautiful
That shines against the light, and seems to have
Immanent radiance. A remote sweet chime
Of bell notes from the clouds comes suddenly. . . .
Wave on wave a glory thrills and goes
Through that still face, those mystic eyes and glad. . . .
Beautiful dreamer, could it make it less
If you should know of your own loveliness?
These flowers, this joy, this music, this white peace
Are with you, of you, show themselves in you,
The sweetest song, the fairest flower of all,
Madonna.

Afterword

The foregoing sonnets, with the exception of "The Home Truth," "By the Shore," and "Easternight," were written within the month following April 12th, 1919; and "Cité d'Orphée," "Weird Weather," "The Time of Trouble," and "Multitudes" were written during the train journey from Chattanooga, Tenn., to Oteen, near Asheville, N. C., where the writer is doing duty as sergeant, M.D.

The writer is a Canadian by birth; English, Irish, and Scots by descent; a traveller by occasional inclination, having circled the Globe. He holds theosophical views. What his politico-economic, and social ideas are it is needless to say.

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